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ABSTRACT

The educational reform movement of the past several years has forced all educators to critically examine both their current and perceived roles. The following model addresses the issues of a changing clientele, a changing society, and a changing expectation of the duties of school guidance counselors. The first requirement of a new scheduling model is to examine the time requirement for counselors. A model program for flexible scheduling was developed for a rural high school serving approximately 1,500 students with four counselors. The counselors were required to account for the same number of work hours as a regular classroom teacher, but the hours were staggered to allow for the flexibility necessary to spend time at school after the typical school day. This model: (1) allows counselors and administrators to work together as a team; (2) requires that the community be informed and educated about the need for a cooperative parent/child/school interaction; (3) requires counselors and administrators to receive educational updating; (4) requires willingness by counselors and administrators to make modifications in current programs and practices; (5) requires counselors and administrators to think in proactive as well as reactive terms; and (6) requires counselors and administrators to analyze their own motivations to determine how much they are willing to do in order to produce healthy, happy, productive citizens. (ABL)

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RESTRUCTURING THE GUIDANCE DELIVERY SYSTEM:

IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

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A paper presented at the annual meeting of the **Southern Rural Education Association** in Nashville, Tennessee, April 19 - 21, 1989.

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RESTRUCTURING THE GUIDANCE DELIVERY SYSTEM:

IMPLICATIONS FOR RURAL HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELORS

Traditional school organizational structures dictate that guidance counselors be treated similar to other teachers. They are often required to participate in extra events, receive similar compensation, and work the same hours as teachers. However, a large portion of the clientele for today's rural high school guidance counselors is not available during regular school hours.

The educational reform of the past several years has forced all educators to critically examine both their current and perceived roles. Guidance counselors are no exception. The reform movement asked counselors to provide additional services to students as more accountability was demanded for college financial aid and college scholarships. However, as counselors were asked to provide more services, time constraints forced counselors and administrators to examine flexible scheduling.

RATIONALE

Why should the administrator or counselor "rock the boat" or risk dissention with their superiors to try a new approach? First, parents are being perceived as a part of the school's clientele. Second, the effective school movement is forcing all educators to more closely examine the technical and human skills utilized in educational environments. Third, society expects the

service function of schools to be enhanced. Fourth, increased accountability is forcing schools to critically examine their productivity. With these concerns, counselors are examining their roles from different perspectives. New demands placed on their professional expertise require a restructuring of the counseling delivery system, congruent with a reanalysis of the clientele system.

Parents as clientele has recently gained increased attention. Tennyson, Miller, Skovholt and Williams (1989) surveyed junior and senior high counselors to determine how they perceived their functions. For junior high counselors not only were 1) working with a family to meet a student's developmental needs, 2) assisting a family to resolve a student's problem, 3) informing parents about school programs, 4) helping parents understand students' characteristics, and 5) and parent conferences the most frequent duty performed by the counselor, but they were also seen as the most important function. Of particular note is that for senior high counselors, these duties were ranked as being of high importance but were not performed very often.

Wilgus and Shelley (1988) confirmed the difference between needs for and time devoted to functions in a study of elementary teachers and counselors. Parent contact was ranked third, behind individual counseling and group counseling, by both teachers and counselors as an ideal. However, as an actual function it was ranked seventh. Wilkerson (1988) by keeping an academic-year log discovered that while parents ranked second, behind students in

terms of time spent, this time was primarily by phone. Faculty, actually got more face-to-face time than parents. She concluded that positive outcomes in terms of changed behavior, problem resolution, and cooperative efforts were most likely to occur with face-to-face relationships.

A related issue is the societal change from the two-parent home to the single-parent home and the change from the single-income home to the dual-income home. This phenomena means that not only are parents not as available to the students, but they also are not as available to the school. Comas, Cecil, and Cecil (1987) have addressed this need quite cogently.

Another issue facing students and parents is obtaining financial aid to attend college or vocational-technical school. Students are often hesitant to discuss family financial status or are ignorant of their parent's financial affairs. However, counselors can discuss the situation with parents if the time is available for both to talk. Typically, the parent is working and often cannot leave work for consulatation with a counselor except in emergencies. The flexible scheduling model allows the counselor the opportunity to meet with parents at times condusive to the parent. Consequently, more parents can be informed about potential financial aid available to their children.

Another reason for having the counselors on the job after normal school hours concerns problems faced by many students in today's society. Parents who experience problems with their children who are involved with some chemical dependency problem, whether alcohol or drugs, need someone to talk with. Often

clinical or professional counseling is threatening to parents and students, but a school counselor is much less threating and often knows more about a student than an agency counselor. The school counselor can be of assistance only if he/she is available at times when the parent can talk. Also, other parents would like to have general kinds of information about their children or the school.

In today's economy, more students are searching for college scholarships than ever before. The main source of information for high school students is their guidance counselor. Guidance departments are a clearinghouse of information concerning scholarships and potential college choices. With the effective schools movement of the past several years, the concern has been for time-on-task in the individual classroom. This has left very little time for students to meet with counselors except in before school or after school sessions. For counselors to have a viable position in the school, they must be aware of service to their clientele, students, parents, and faculty.

Finally, counselors must deal with the question: "Can we demonstrate that we are a significantly positive force in the lives of our students and in the school environment?" In essence, the issue is accountability. Hayden and Pohlmann (1981) contend that accountability is necessary for survival of guidance programs. They suggest a three-step process. First, define the duties. Second, track the duties. Third, evaluate the duties.

The following model is an effect to address the issues of a

changing clientele, a changing society, and a changing expectation of counselors and schools.

MODEL

The first requirement of a new scheduling model is examining the time requirement for counselors. If new services demand flexible scheduling, the same eight to three school day is not appropriate. However, not all school boards and superintendents understand the advantages of flexible scheduling, nor are they willing to take the risks of implementation. It is apparently easier to require homogeniety than flexibility. Policies regarding scheduling for personnel tend to be the result of either poor information of a lack of vision for the mission of the school. Personnel policies are typically uniform, bureaucratic and provide standardized implementation for all concerned. This revised counseling program is designed to insure flexibility in both time-on-task and in the variety of strategies used to reach a changing clientele. Today's guidance counselor needs to creatively administer complex, nonroutine situations by using divergent strategies during non-traditional times.

A model program for flexible scheduling was developed for a rural high school serving approximately 1500 students with four guidance counselors. The counselors were required to account for the same number of work hours as a regular classroom teacher, but the hours were staggered to allow for the flexibility necessary to spend time at school after the typical eight-to-three school day.

Counselor A	Monday	7 am - 2 pm
	Tuesday	12 pm - 7 pm
	Wednesday	10 am - 5 pm
	Thursday	8 am - 3 pm
	Friday	8 am - 3 pm
Counselor B	Monday	8 am - 3 pm
	Tuesday	7 am - 2 pm
	Wednesday	12 pm - 7 pm
	Thursday	10 am - 5 pm
	Friday	8 am - 3 pm
Counselor C	Monday	10 am - 5 pm
	Tuesday	8 am - 3 pm
	Wednesday	7 am - 2 pm
	Thursday	12 pm - 7 pm
	Friday	10 am - 5 pm
Counselor D	Monday	12 pm - 7 pm
	Tuesday	10 am - 5 pm
	Wednesday	8 am - 3 pm
	Thursday	7 am - 2 pm
	Friday	10 am - 5 pm

There could be, of course, several modifications in this model. One such modification would involve each counselor's being assigned the same time each day of the week. Schedules could then be modified each semester.

IMPLICATIONS

There are several implications of this model.

1. Counselors and administrators must work together as a team and support each other.
2. The community must be informed of and educated about the need for a cooperative parent/child/school interaction.
3. Counselors and administrators need educational updating to "break out of a rut".

4. Counselors and administrators must be willing to make modifications in current programs and practices if they are to provide services to their diverse clientele.
5. Counselors and administrators need to think in proactive as well as reactive terms.
6. Counselors and administrators may need to analyze their own motivations to determine how much they are willing to do in order to produce healthy, happy, productive citizens.

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